

AUTHORS

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Duxbury Clipper



LAUDABLE LITERATURE - Author Barbara O'Connor won the Mass. State Book Award for her children's novel *Moonpie and Ivy*. O'Connor has lived in Duxbury the last fourteen years.

Local Author Wins Mass. Book Award

Duxbury author Barbara O'Connor has won the Mass. Book Award for Children's Literature for her most recent children's book, *Moonpie and Ivy*.

The award is given every year by the Mass. Center for the Book, an organization affiliated with the Library of Congress that promotes reading and literacy.

"I was totally surprised by the award," O'Connor said. This is the second award for *Moonpie and Ivy*. O'Connor also received the Spring 2001 Parent's Choice Gold Award for Fiction for the book.

O'Connor has published two other children's novels, *Me and Rupert Goody* in 1999, and *Beethoven in Paradise* in 1997. The books are all set in the south, where O'Connor grew up.

She also writes children's biographies, and has just completed one on Leonardo da Vinci.

"There's not a lot of traveling when you're dealing with children's biographies. It's mainly time in libraries and research," O'Connor said.

The Mass. Book Award came with a plaque, and a monetary award, which O'Connor quickly put towards a new laptop computer that will help her with future books, including a new novel that's due out in May.

"I love it. I haven't figured out what to do with my old computer yet," she said.

The Center for the Book does a lot of publicity for award winners, including sending posters of the awards to all the libraries in the state, and posting discussion guides to the books on its website.

The Duxbury Free Library recognized O'Connor's award as well.

"They are so nice. They sent me flowers," O'Connor said.

When she isn't writing, O'Connor stays busy visiting middle school children nation-wide to talk about writing, and encourage young authors.

"It's great to write for children, but it's really great to get to interact with them," O'Connor said. The students she visits often ask for her autograph on scraps of paper.

"They're excited. It's so much fun," she said.

An awards ceremony was held in October in Worcester. There, O'Connor got to mingle with fellow award-winner Dennis Lehane, who won in the fiction category for *Mystic River*.

"The whole thing has been great," O'Connor said.